

Philadelphia, 13. Sept. 1886

Hon D. M. Fox

Superintendent,

Sir.

I solicit in all sincerity and kindly feeling your receiving and tolerating the few ideas I desire to express in relation to the overtime recently marked down to my men. lest you should wound the excellent gift of Charity in charging them or their foreman with intentional wrong in marking the men's time at a higher rate than the actual time would seem to warrant. I cannot believe that you would willingly charge men with fraudulent intentions unless you believed that you had good and sufficient ground for the charge, because in our short intercourse, I have seen & admired so much of your kindly spirit, that I know the charge to be foreign to your character. At the same time I know that your strict integrity must express an abhorrence of fraud. I have therefore, as I think, good reason for saying that I think you have drawn erroneous conclusions as to fraud in mark-

ing the time of men in the Melting Department, because you were not sufficiently apprised of the circumstances of the case.

When you first approached me on the subject, my mind, being full of various operations in this Department, required repose and reflection to ascertain the causes of your apparent discovery of fraud. I have since reflected on it, and herewith present the points that memory brings up to view.

When the business of melting silver increased largely (within the last ⁴ 3 or ⁵ 4 years) it was supposed that it might not continue long enough to make further changes than to employ the same set of men to accomplish the work by overtime, and at the rate noted in S. 3. p. 23 (Intro. & Regul.), viz. at the same rate as for ordinary and regular work. Such practice was followed for some time.

When the overwork made a seriously large addition to the daily work, and continued, not for days, but for months and a year or more, it was deemed unjust to the men to ask them to contribute a portion of their health and life to the service of the Gov-

ernment without a corresponding and adequate compensation, additional to that for daily work. This was allowed by the Superintendent, and if memory do not fail me, it was agreed upon by the then Director (Burchard) and Superintendent (Snowden) in conferences with the officers of the Mint. I can affirm positively that neither officers nor men ever exercised such a power without higher authority. The higher charges for such continued overtime emanated from the only authority known to the Officers and men.

May I add my personal opinion, due to experience, that the allowance of an ordinary rate of wages, for such overtime, as has latterly been spent in the Melting Department, in accordance with the exact verbal sense of the Regulations would necessarily result in personal injury to the health of the workmen. It seems to me that the special allowance, granted under the late Director, and Asst^d, is within the spirit of the Regulations, and was designed by them to be in accordance with such a spirit. At all events, however you may view the action of the then Director, & Superintendent, I feel confident that you will be glad to relieve your anxiety for the ap-

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Having had charge of workmen for many years in the Mint, I have learned from experience that a very large proportion of men are fairly reliable in their moral relations — to the hours of work under the Government — to their fellow workmen — and largely to those who are appointed over them as Foremen, and as Officers of the Mint. The fact that one foreman can successfully superintend 10 to 30 or more workmen successfully is the clearest evidence of a prevailing moral sense. Hence my general reliance on men in my Dep^t of the Mint, strengthened by 35 years of public service. My trust has been not passively relying on first observation, but actively watchful lest some one should prove recreant to the trust committed to him, and so draw down unwarrantable suspicion on others.

Very Respectfully
 J. C. Booth
 M & R

3328

Phila. Pa.
U. S. Mint.
Sept 13. 1886

Jas. C. Booth,
M & R.

Relative to the charge of
"overtime recently marked
down to his men."

Rec'd Sept 13. 1886

[Abstract:] Relative to the charge of “overtime recently marked down to his men”.

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